

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY KINSHASA
Public Diplomacy Section**

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: Academy for Women Entrepreneurs

Funding Opportunity Number: DOS-AF-DRC-PDS-FY23-04

Deadline for Applications: July 5, 2023

Assistance Listing Number: 19. 022/Fulbright Hays

Announcement Type: Cooperative Agreement

Total Amount Available: \$30,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out an Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program to train and enhance the capacity of 100 women entrepreneurs across the DRC, targeting women in conflict areas.

By promoting women's economic opportunities and ensuring that women have the capabilities and resources needed to participate in the economy, the AWE program directly supports the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. In the DRC, AWE will harness the power of public-private sponsors, local partnerships and U.S. exchange alumni networks to help women and their business grow, driving localized prosperity.

Priority Cities: Kinshasa, Goma, Lubumbashi, Bukavu and Kisangani.

Program Objectives:

Political and security factors contribute heavily to the difficulty of women becoming entrepreneurs in the DRC. Numerous armed conflicts lead to economic hardship, development challenges, and social inequality. As a result, high numbers of people remain below the poverty line. If women entrepreneurs receive capacity-building training, allowing them to establish sustainable microenterprises, then their families and communities will benefit. This outcome supports U.S. women's empowerment goals and the U.S. priority of strengthening bilateral economic ties by creating economic opportunities.

The Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program was established by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to support women entrepreneurs around the world. The AWE program provides female

entrepreneurs with the skills, resources, and networks needed to launch and scale businesses within an inclusive learning community. Objectives include:

- Providing resources for women to engage in U.S.-style online education with guided facilitation and localization;
- Fostering networks that support AWE participants' access to peer-to-peer mentorship and scaling opportunities; and
- Providing access to resources and ongoing ECA programs that will help women bring their business ideas to life.

The core of the AWE model is the DreamBuilder online course, which implementing partners supplement with a variety of content such as guest speakers, presentations, and site visits. DreamBuilder is an online entrepreneurship training program for women, developed through a partnership between Arizona State University's Thunderbird School of Global Management and global copper mining company Freeport-McMoRan.

The AWE program in DRC will train and enhance the capacity of 100 women entrepreneurs in five cities who have been running businesses for at least one year. Women business owners who are U.S. alumni will serve as primary facilitators with support from our American Spaces network countrywide in partnership with local NGOs that focus on sustainable management solutions.

In phase one, facilitators will guide participants through the online DreamBuilder entrepreneurship training program for women (approximately three weeks). In phase two, facilitators will support participants as they put what they have learned into practice, holding weekly sessions (virtual or in person) to discuss challenges and share best practices (approximately six months). The implementing partner will build on existing entrepreneurship networks to create and/or consolidate a cohort of women entrepreneurs who can support each other, share best practices, and scale up their businesses. In phase three, selected women entrepreneurs from each city (5-10 total) will come to Kinshasa for an in-person pitch session with investors to scale up their businesses. Travel expenses should be included in the budget.

With AWE, Post hopes to consolidate, professionalize, and expand existing entrepreneurial networks, leveraging alumni contacts in five provinces/cities (Tshopo/Kisangani, Kinshasa/Kinshasa, Haut Katanga/Lubumbashi, Sud-Kivu/Bukavu and Nord-Kivu/Goma). If our initial cohort is successful, we hope to expand to other provinces/cities and across regional borders.

Participants and Audiences:

Participants will include 100 emerging women entrepreneurs selected from five cities (20 women per city), with a focus on women in conflict areas. Women business owners who are U.S. alumni will serve as primary facilitators, supported by PDS Kinshasa's American Spaces network countrywide in partnership with local NGOs that focus on

sustainable management solutions. U.S. program alumni will serve as mentors and trainers. Inclusive, sustainable business ideas will be prioritized.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: 17 months (July 2023 – November 2024)

Number of awards anticipated: 1 award (dependent on amounts)

Total available funding: \$30,000

Type of Funding: FY23 – Fulbright-Hays

Anticipated program start date: July 2023

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement

Post funding: As needed, for follow-on activities not included in the budget, post may grant up to \$10,000. A six-month follow up period will be designed with the implementing partner to create sustainable management follow-on plans to maintain the network of women entrepreneurs.

The American Spaces and the Alumni Network may provide additional funding/in-kind support. Mission Kinshasa will provide some logistical support. The in-person sessions will be held at our American Spaces. Although Bukavu does not yet have an American Space (we are developing one), we have a partner organization that will provide internet connectivity. The implementing partner will work with the city-specific stakeholders to ensure attendance and follow-up. Participants will use public transport.

Program Performance Period: Proposed program activities should be completed in 1 year, with the exception of the showcase during Global Entrepreneurship Week in November 2024.

The approximate timeline for this program is as follows:

- July-August 2023: Preparation and training for AWE 2023 facilitators
- September-October 2023: Announcement and outreach
- November 2023: Inaugural sessions of AWE during Global Entrepreneurship Week
- January-March 2024: Training sessions using DreamBuilder online course
- April-July 2024: Follow-on activities by Full Development Agency (FDA)
- November 2024: Showcasing of success stories during the Global Entrepreneurship Week

Optional: The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants: The following organizations are eligible to apply:
 - Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/nongovernmental organizations with programming experience
 - Individuals
 - Non-profit educational institutions
 - Governmental institutions
2. Cost Sharing or Matching: Not required.
3. Other Eligibility Requirements:
 - In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.
 - Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization per deadline. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION: Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible. Applications must include all the information listed in the U.S. Embassy grant proposal template (DOC 85 KB).

1. Content of Application:

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity and how they relate to the Embassy strategic goals stated in this NOFO?
- All documents are in English.
- All budgets are in U.S. Dollars.
- All pages are numbered.
- All documents are formatted to A4 or 8 ½ x 11-inch paper.
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

- a. **Mandatory Forms:** The following documents are required (application forms required below are available on the U.S. Embassy Kinshasa website or on Grants.gov):

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)
- SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) – required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov.

b. **Summary Coversheet:** Cover sheet stating the applicant’s name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

c. **Proposal (15-page maximum):** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives, anticipated impact, and target audience.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A succinct description of past and present operations, demonstrating ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed.
- **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. What aspect of the relationship between the U.S. and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be supported? The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
- **Proposed Program Schedule:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?

- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

d. **Budget Justification Narrative:** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions below for further information.

e. **Attachments:**

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities
- Documentation of non-profit or non-commercial status

2. Required Registrations:

- All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.
- ***Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.***
- The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.
- ***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.***
- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to**

apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.

If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain a CAGE or NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

- **Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:**
 - Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.
- **Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:**
 - Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

- **Exemptions:** An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:
 - An applicant's identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
 - For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.
- Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

3. **Submission Dates and Times:** PDS Kinshasa will accept proposals until July 5, 2023.
4. **Funding Restrictions:** N/A
5. **Other Submission Requirements:** All application materials must be submitted by email to KinshasaPDGrants@state.gov.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. **Criteria:** Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria outlined below. The criteria listed are closely related and are considered in judging the overall quality of an application:
 - **Organizational capacity and record on previous grants (25 points):** The organization has expertise in its stated field and PD is confident of its ability to undertake the program. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
 - **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea (25 points):** The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.
 - **Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives (15 points):** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. Applicant has clearly described how stated goals are related to and support U.S. Embassy Kinshasa's priority themes with target audiences.
 - **Budget (15 points):** The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.
 - **Monitoring and evaluation plan (15 points):** Applicant demonstrates an ability to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.
 - **Sustainability (5 points):** Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.
2. **Review and Selection Process:** An Embassy Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications monthly. Successful applicants will be notified in writing.

3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly FAPIIS): The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a U.S. government awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates: Proposals will be reviewed monthly and successful applicants will be informed within 4 weeks of submission.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices: The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

a. Issuance of this Notice of Funding Opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

b. **Payment Method:** Payments will be made in at least two installments, as needed to carry out the program activities. The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa reserves the right to amend the final amount to be reimbursed after reviewing the final progress and financial reports. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

[Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:

- Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
- Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
- Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty (E.O. 13798) and Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
- Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
- Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

3. **Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).
4. **Foreign Assistance Data Review:** As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS: If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact PD at: KinshasaPDGrants@state.gov. Note: We do not provide pre-consultation for application-related questions that are addressed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Once an application has been submitted, U.S. Embassy Kinshasa staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.

H. OTHER INFORMATION: Guidelines for Budget Justification

- **Personnel:** Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.
- **Travel:** Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.
- **Equipment:** Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.
- **Supplies:** List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.
- **Contractual:** Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

- **Other Direct Costs:** Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.
- **Indirect Costs:** These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.
- **Cost Share:** “Cost sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.
- **Alcoholic Beverages:** Award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.